Wemba Wemba language

The **Wemba Wemba language** is an extinct Aboriginal Australian language once spoken along the tributaries of the Murrumbidgee River.

Nari Nari, a dialect of Wemba Wemba, is as of 2020 part of a language revival project. Other dialects are Baraba Baraba and Wergaia.

Jardwadjali (with dialects **Jagwadjali**, **Nundadjali**, **Mardidjali**) may be Wemba-Wemba,[4] or may be closer to the Madhi–Ladji–Wadi varieties.

Wemba-Wemba	
Eastern Central Murray	
Region	Victoria
Ethnicity	Wemba-Wemba, Nari-Nari, Barapa Barapa, Wergaia, Wotjobaluk, Marditjali, ?Jardwadjali
Extinct	(date missing)[1]
Language family	Pama–Nyungan ▪ Kulinic ▪ Kulin ▪ **Wemba-Wemba**
Dialects	Nari Nari Baraba Baraba Wergaia (incl. Wotjobaluk) ? Jardwadjali
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`xww` – inclusive code Individual codes: `rnr` – Nari-Nari `rbp` – Baraba-Baraba `weg` – Wergaia `xwt` – Wotjobaluk
Glottolog	`west2443 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/west2443)` incl. Madhi–Ladji–Wadi[2]
AIATSIS[3]	`D1 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/D1)`

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Sounds

Consonants

	Labial	Velar	Dental	Palatal	Alveolar	Retroflex
Stop	p	k	t̪	c	t	ʈ
Nasal	m	ŋ		ɲ	n	ɳ
Lateral					l	ɭ
Rhotic					r	ɽ
Approximant	w			j		

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	ɪ, i		ʊ, u
Mid	ɛ, e	ə	ɔ, o
Open		a	

Voiced consonant sounds only occur within prenasalized stops. Prenasal consonants include: /mb/ /nd/ /ndy/ /ng/ and /rnd/. In phonetic form they are pronounced as [mb] [nd] [ɲɟ] [ŋg] and [ɳɖ].[5]

Influence on English

At least four botanical terms in Australian English are thought to have been introduced into local speech from Wemba-Wemba:

- *dilanj* =nitre bush/dillon
- *lerep* =lerp/honeydew or lerp manna.
- *gambang* = bulrush/cumbungi.
- *mali* =Mallee.[6]
- The word yabby, a type of crayfish, comes from Wemba-Wemba.[7]

Language revival

As of 2020, the Nari Nari dialect[8] is one of 20 languages prioritised as part of the Priority Languages Support Project, being undertaken by First Languages Australia and funded by the Department of Communications and the Arts. The project aims to "identify and document critically-endangered languages — those languages for which little or no documentation exists, where no recordings have previously been made, but where there are living speakers".[9]

External links

- Wemba Wemba language (http://www.omniglot.com/writing/wembawemba.htm)

References

1. "D1: Wemba Wemba" (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/d1). *Austlang*. AIATSIS. Retrieved 14 January 2020.
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Western Victoria [Kulin]" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/west2443). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. D1 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/D1) Wemba-Wemba at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
4. R. M. W. Dixon, *Australian Languages: Their Nature and Development: v. 1 (Cambridge Language Surveys)*. Cambridge University Press, 2002. ISBN 978-0-521-47378-1
5. Hercus, Luise A. (1992). *Wembawemba Dictionary*.
6. Clarke 2008, p. 52.

7. *Oxford Dictionary of English*, p 2,054.
8. "D9: Nari Nari" (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/d9). *Austlang*. AIATSIS. Retrieved 14 January 2020.
9. "Priority Languages Support Project" (https://www.firstlanguages.org.au/projects/plsp). *First Languages Australia*. Retrieved 14 January 2020.

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